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More Than You Know

by [Tygertrygerr](#)

Summary

Sometimes the things you want most are right in front of you, and you don't realize it until its too late.

Notes

See the end of the work for [notes](#)

“Dr. Ziegler, please, have a seat.”

The doctor sits in one of the only two seats available in the office she was in. In front of her was a large metallic desk, the contents on top of it presented in an extremely organized matter, not even a single pen out of place. In a black, leather office chair on the other side of the desk sat the most important woman in the whole hospital. Many others would be filled with dread just at the thought of being summoned into her office, but Dr. Angela Ziegler knows better. She knows exactly why she was called in here by the Chief of Staff, Satya Vaswani. “Chief, Vaswani,” she greets in return.

“So. I have read the reports on your research into nanobiology, and I must say, Dr. Ziegler, that this is indeed some of your most brilliant work yet.” At this, Angela smiles, but not in response to the praise. “Tell me, have you tested it out yet?”

“Not on a large scale, no. I probably can’t even say I’ve tested on a small scale. I’m mostly just theorizing and hypothesising alongside a virtual simulator I’ve created with the help of a colleague. It still has a very long way to go.”

Satya nods along to her words. “I can’t wait to see the finished results. You *truly* are a blessing to have in my hospital, Dr. Zeigler.”

There it is.

If there was one thing Angela noticed during her time working here, it was that whenever Chief Vaswani needed to ask a favor of her she always made a flattering comment beforehand. She knew exactly what she was called here for. “Satya,” she begins, both their eyes meeting at the use of her first name. Though Angela is special, she was only special enough that occasionally she could disregard surnames. “Did you really bring me here to flatter me with your kind words? Or would you like to get to the reason you really called me here for?”

Satya smirks, this having been a scene played out many times before. She reaches into her drawer to pull out a folder, placing it on the desk and pushing it towards Angela. “There's a patient I would you to look after,” she states, blunt and straight to the point now. “She's been proving to be quite a handful for the nurses and her current doctor.”

Angela takes the folder off the table, reading the name written on the cover.

Fareeha Amari.

She reaches into the folder to pull out the patient’s diagnostics, frowning slightly at what she read. “So, she's dying?”

“At the moment, yes, slowly. Another reason I ask this if you, Angela, is because I feel this patient could potentially benefit from your nanobiotics. You theorize that they should be able to slowly heal and reverse damage. Well, I'm not sure if you read the file, but—”

“Her body is slowly deteriorating from the inside...”

Satya gives her a slight glare for interrupting, to which she curtly apologizes, having gotten caught up in the information in the files. “Yes, it seems dormant now but for whatever reason her body is slowly weakening. It’s so sporadic we can’t even give an estimated time frame.”

“And you don’t know what’s causing it?”

“No, all scans and tests come back clean.”

She had to admit that this would provide a good opportunity to see how effective her research has been. It was even possible to could save this woman's life, however she didn't want to jump the gun so fast. Also it sounded like a very interesting case, and what doctor didn’t enjoy a good case? “Alright. I’ll do it.”

“I knew I could count on you, Angela.”

With matters having been settled Angela stands up to leave.

“How is your search for your soulmate going?”

Angela stops her movements, turning back around to the woman at the desk. She doesn't know why Satya would ask that, especially with no context whatsoever. The question brings up the thought of the special mark on her wrist, covered currently by the sleeves of her coat. When Angela first got her mark at 18 she was ecstatic. The thought that somewhere out there in the world there was another person destined only for you was thrilling. Growing up she would ask her uncle about soulmates, despite him never finding his own. She would always ask, numerous times, how does one know they've found their soulmate. Yes, she knew the answer herself, but there was something about hearing it over and over again that made her so giddy.

When you meet your soulmate you'll feel it in your heart and on your mark, but it only happens once so don't miss it.

Angela has been waiting for that moment for so long, and here she is in her early 30’s still waiting. Clearly, Satya was aware of Angela's quest for her soulmate, but she still couldn't figure out what would peak her interest so suddenly.

“Well, I haven't found them yet, but I'm still looking,” replies the doctor, the hopefulness strong in her voice.

At that Satya smiles; a genuine one, too. “That's what I like to hear.”

“I've actually already set up a date a few days from now with someone.”

“Best of luck to you then, Dr. Ziegler.”

Angela's eyes narrow at her higher ups behavior, but she passes it off as simple curiosity as she leaves. With the topic on her mind now, she pushes the sleeve of her right arm up a little bit to look at the soulmark on the inside of her wrist. It was a symbol of a white feather, not too small and not too large. Usually your soulmark is a sort of reflection on you as a person. Angela never understood what a feather could possibly say about her, but her uncle had jokingly told her one day it means she is an angel. She didn't think much of it at the time, but these days, especially after being called as such by patients occasionally, she finds that it is fitting.

On her search for her soulmate she tries to meet with people whose soulmarks relate to hers in some way. She's met a few people with birds as their soulmark, however, none of them was the person she was looking for. These days, not too many people took the whole soulmate thing anyway. Those who do definitely fell into the minority, and she's sure mathematically that must somehow decrease your chances, but she perseveres on regardless.

Angela opens the door to her office, plopping down into her chair with a sigh. Her computer is on, the screen reflecting various parts of her current research on nanobiotics. She had a couple of potential prototypes that she just needed to run through her simulator before she could attempt them. She pulls out Fareeha's patient file, skimming through her information. The woman has a rare disease that is slowly killing her from the inside. The origins of it are unknown, but it is essentially destroying her body from the inside. The doctor will have to check and see how she's doing so far, but within anywhere from three to six Fareeha could start losing strength, have trouble breathing, and a whole list of potential other problems. Satya had said she was stable now, but who knows how long it'll stay that way? They haven't even figured out yet what's causing this.

If she can get these biotics of hers to truly work their function, she should be able to reverse these damages. The goal of her nanotech was to take damage done to the body and heal it, though in actuality the nanomachines would act as a catalyst to rebuild it. In her simulations her nanomachines can heal a large open wound. She is unsure how well it would work, in Fareeha's case though. Regardless, she enters the woman's data from the file into her simulation program. This way, she can run tests to determine whether it will be safe to administer the biotics to the patient without any negative side effects. Afterwards, she begins running said tests and changing her formulas accordingly to accommodate any changes.

The next day, Angela decides to finally go visit her new patient. She had ran tests all night and changed the formula quite a few times, but in the end decided she should visit the woman to take some blood and a few other small things before finalizing her first dosage.. Her eyes land on the door up ahead of her as she approaches. The sign next to the door displaying the room number reads 690. Angela turns into the room, in greeting. “Hello there, I’m—”

She stops short seeing that there is no one in the bed. A turn to her left find the bathroom door open with the lights off. Confused, she steps back out to check the room number. She does have the correct room. Angel steps back in, walking to the bed to check the other side. She still finds no one, and just as she is about to call for Satya, a breeze flows in from the window, wide open with the curtains billowing from the wind. She glances at the open window and then to the empty bed. The thought crosses her mind that possibly—

No...

In a quick step Angela is at the window, hands on either side of the frame as she sticks her head outside. She looks to the right. Nothing. The left? The wind blows fiercely again in that moment. Her hair whips across her face. Her beating heart stops abruptly at the sight before her. Sitting on the ledge a few feet away from the window, feet dangling six stories high from the busy street, was her patient. She was looking away from her, staring down at the streets below, hands resting on the edge of the ledge. Black hair was blowing in the wind, a faint rattling noise can be heard from the golden beads in her hair. Her heart was beating now, though much faster than before. Her new patient entrusted to her by the chief of this hospital was potentially trying to kill herself? Before she knew what she was doing she was calling her name. “Fareeha!”

At the sound of her name being called, the woman turns in shock. Her face is one of surprise as blue eyes meet her own brown ones. In that moment Angela feels a tightening in her chest. There is a pulsing feeling on her wrist and she takes some weight off of her arms leaning heavily on the window frame. For a second she sees a flash of confusion on Fareeha’s face as she reaches a hand up to rub lightly at a spot on her chest. She stares at Angela so hard for a second Angela wonders whether she was even truly looking at her. The woman still makes no move to get back inside however and Angela leans further out the window, reaching a hand towards her.

“Fareeha!” she calls again, snapping the woman from whatever daze she was in.

She looks at the outstretched hand and then back at the doctor's face before slowly standing into a crouch and making her way across the ledge. Once close enough she grabs onto Angela’s hand as the blonde helps her back in through the window. Fareeha climbs through the window landing on the floor where she takes a seat. Angela shuts the window behind her with a heavy exhale before she, too, slides down the wall onto the floor. She tilts her head back against the wall and closes her

eyes. Her heart still races. She can feel her hands trembling slightly, and she must have leaned on her wrist wrong as there was still a faint pulsing sensation. When she opens her eyes she looks to the woman next to her, her eyes fixated on a spot on the ground in front of her and her hand still on that spot on her chest. When she feels Angela's gaze on her she looks over at the doctor.

Angela meets her with a warm smile. She activates her doctor vision and scans her patient for any signs of injury. She finds nothing, but still feels the need to ask. "Are you alright?"

Fareeha nods in response. There's still an emotion on her face that Angela can't grasp. A part of her wants to pursue it, but she decides not to, rising to her feet instead. She once again reaches a hand to the tanned woman, helping pull her up when she accepts. She is a few inches taller than her, she notes, as she has to look up slightly to meet her eyes.

"I'm Angela Ziegler. I'll be your new doctor from now on," she says as she leads Fareeha back to the bed. "I had wanted to get a blood sample and a few other things, but things have taken an... unexpected turn..." Fareeha still says nothing. It's as if she is thinking very hard about something. Angela wants to know why she was outside the window, but isn't sure she should question. She will have one of the custodial staff lock up her window with a key however. She'd also have to tell Chief Vaswani about this. If this was truly an attempted suicide it would be urgent that she knew.

As if reading her mind, Fareeha places a hand on her forearm to get her attention. "Please. Don't tell anyone."

It was the first time Angela heard the smallest of sounds from the woman before her and she had to admit her voice was certainly pleasant. She looked down at the tanned hand gripping onto her arm, pleading with her, then back to the woman laying in bed. She considers it for a while, reaching her conclusion with a sigh. "You owe me an explanation, Ms. Amari. I expect one tomorrow when I return."

Fareeha smiles at her response, content that she would keep this secret. Angela can't help but think that she has a beautiful smile.

The rest of the day Angela is thinking about her first time meeting Fareeha Amari and just how insane it was that that was how they met.

When tomorrow comes, Angela visits Fareeha just as she promised she would. She let go of a breath she didn't even realize she was holding upon seeing the woman in bed. There's a different aura around her today. It's... pleasant.

"Good afternoon, Fareeha," she greets, picking up the clipboard at the end of the bed to check over the nurse's notes.

"Dr. Zeigler. I see you're right on time to collect that blood sample you wanted."

Angela glances up over the edge of the clipboard to look at the woman in bed. She seemed like a whole new person today, not even taking into the consideration the fact that she was actually talking. "Yes, that and a few other things I'm going to need from you today." A nurse comes in with a rolling tray of supplies, Angela thanking her as she leaves. "The first thing I'm going to need is a urine sample," she says, handing Fareeha a small plastic jar from the tray.

"You could at least take me out to dinner before demanding a jar of one's pee."

Angela raises an eyebrow, but she decides to play along. "I'm sorry, did you want to sit and chat over tea to warm up first?" she teased.

Fareeha smiles, watching as the doctor readies some things on the tray. "Tell me something about yourself, Doctor."

Angela stops what she's doing to look at her, before continuing her tasks. "My, we sure are talkative today. I probably wouldn't have to look far to find the cat that held your tongue yesterday." She doesn't look up from what she's doing but she can feel Fareeha's amusement, those eyes definitely settled on her. She has no doubt in her mind they could go on throwing remarks at each other all day, but before she can retort with some witty quip, she interjects. "Go pee in the cup, Amari."

She finally gets Fareeha into the bathroom to provide her sample, which she thankfully accepts, placing it in a plastic baggie and then on the tray. With that out the way she begins a standard checkup, listening to her heart, checking blood pressure, and the usual. Throughout it all she doesn't hear a single word from her patient. When she pulls out the needle to take blood is when she finally decides to speak.

"Will you tell me something about yourself now, Doctor?"

Angela disinfects the bend of Fareeha's arm with a wipe, prepping the needle. "Something like what, Fareeha," she says, too focused on her actions to actually pose it as a question.

"Anything."

She sticks the needle in, sticking the vain. She's positive she felt Fareeha flinch at the entry, "Let's see..." She pulls up on the syringe to take the blood she needs. "There are these chocolate chip cookie ice cream sandwiches in the cafeteria vending machine, and I find them to be quite addicting." She removes the needle, wiping the exit point with another wipe, and grabbing Fareeha's other hand to hold pressure to the spot.

"Hmm, I've never had ice cream before."

Angela stops her actions in shock. "Really?"

"Really."

She hums in response, signaling for her to open her mouth as she wiped the inside of her cheeks with a cotton swab. "I think it's your turn to tell me something about you now."

"I already did."

"That doesn't count, and you still owe me an explanation for the heart attack you gave me yesterday."

"Doctor, are you admitting your heart beats for me?"

There was a silence during which they both looked at each other. Fareeha laying with a smug look on her face, Angela staring at her in disbelief. What was this sudden change in character? The woman laying before her had turned a whole 180 degrees from her behavior yesterday. Or, was her behavior yesterday a 180 from her behavior now? She thought back to what Satya had told her in regards to uncooperativeness and behavior issues as of late. It isn't uncommon for patients, especially patients with a condition like hers, to exhibit such behavior, but could that have been related to how she found her yesterday? What was it that has her so cheery all of a sudden?

Angela sighs. She could think about all these questions with no answers or she could just accept it for what it is. Looking over to Fareeha sitting up in the bed, the largest of smiles on her face, she thinks this look suits her better anyway.

“You're really ridiculous.”

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They have a few more appointments after that day, and during all of them Fareeha is as witty and flirtatious as ever. Angela finds that she doesn't mind though. She makes excellent company and Angela finds that she's drawn to her in a way she can't explain, sometimes stopping by to check up on her even when there isn't really anything that needs checking. Over the course of two weeks, they build an interesting friendship. Fareeha turns her daily questions into a game of sorts where they each tell each other something about themselves whenever they see each other. So far they've only shared minor details such as favorite things to do, their dislikes, and things of that sort. It was nice and refreshing to learn about each other in that way.

Angela had gone on a few dates since the one she had planned when she first took this case. All of them were nice, but sadly the person just wasn't the right match. She did, however, have a date planned with a potential soulmate. It is on that exact same day that she finally finishes the first dose of nanos to give Fareeha. She had explained to the woman her study of nanobiology and how she was hoping to create a way to reverse her illness. She asked Fareeha for her consent as it would be very trial and error, expecting some sort of doubt or suspicion from her. Instead she was shocked when she pronounced that she would try anything the doctor had to offer her. Such was how Angela found herself in Fareeha's room that evening, a syringe of nanobots in her hands, her subject more than willing to have them injected into her.

“You can still say no, Fareeha.”

Even with her consent, she still wanted to make sure that this was truly what the other wanted. She had ran a multitude of simulations and found that nothing potentially harmful would come out of this whether it worked or not, but she still just wanted to be absolutely sure. She didn't like the idea of testing on animals first, but she also didn't like testing on people either. Some things were just too unpredictable.

“Doctor. I want this. I'll do whatever it takes if there's a chance it'll help me live longer,” Fareeha replies in what must have been the most serious voice Angela's heard from her yet. It was just what she needed to stomp down all the doubts she, herself, was having.

“Alright. It might hurt a little. I'm going to administer it closest to your heart so it can be most effective.”

Fareeha nods and Angela prepares the entry point, a prominent vein right around her collarbone. She expects that Fareeha will strike up conversation any second now, a habit of hers she realized she'd do whenever she was about to get an injection of some sort. She theorizes that she isn't really a fan of needles.

“So, what shall you tell me about yourself today, Dr. Ziegler?”

As expected.

Angela smiles to herself, internally content that she picked up on the woman's habits so easily. She pondered what her detail of the day could be as she made the injection into her vein. Her mind went to the dinner she had planned for tonight and decided that would have to do for now. “I'm going on a date tonight.”

She could have sworn she saw the quickest of frowns flash across her tanned face, but was too concentrated on the task at hand to be sure.

“What's the occasion?”

Angela removes the needle and provides a gauze for Fareeha to apply pressure with. “There isn't one. I'm just on a search for my soulmate is all,” she replied, removing her gloves and disposing properly of the used needle.

Fareeha's other hand comes up to rub at her chest as she tries to keep a pleasant face. “I don't think soulmates work that way, Doctor.”

“How so? And please, call me Angela.”

Fareeha looks away, her hands suddenly becoming a lot more interesting. “I don't know, my mother used to say two people who truly are soulmates would find each other through fate. A date arranged by two individuals hardly sounds like fate..”

“Mhmm, sounds to me like someone is just jealous,” Angela teased, though she had to admit her mother sounded like she knew what she was talking about. At her jest, Fareeha bows her head lower, sinking back into the bed as she grumbled denials under her breath. Angela smiled at the sight.

She's so cute.

Her face reddened slightly at the thought. Thankfully, Fareeha was looking away and didn't notice.

“Hey, I was just joking. It's your turn to tell me yours.”

Fareeha glanced at her with her peripherals, her head still turned away from her. She sunk even further into the bed, almost under the covers as she mumbled. “Maybe, I am just a little jealous...”

What.

It was low but she still heard her confession. By now Fareeha was completely underneath the blankets, most likely too embarrassed to meet Angela's gaze. Angela ran what she said through her mind, making connections before coming to the conclusion that one doesn't get to have much of a love life from a hospital bed. Here she is talking about her date when Fareeha probably hasn't been outside for a while. Anyone would feel jealous in that position, right?

“I'm sorry, Fareeha, I didn't mean to make you upset,” she apologizes walking back to stand next to the side of the bed, where she remained hidden underneath the blankets. She received no reply. “Fareeha...”

“Go have fun on your date, Dr. Ziegler,” came the muffled replies through the bed linens.

Angela sighs, realizing that she plans on staying hidden away until she leaves. Sometimes she can be a bit stubborn, she's come to realize over time. “I'll be back to check on you tomorrow afternoon then.” She stood there a little longer in case she decided to emerge from her now makeshift cocoon, sighing when no such thing happened. The clicking sound of her heels sounded through the room as she made her way to the doorway, stopping just short of the exit. “Goodnight, Fareeha.”

Silence. But Angela stood by the doorway anyway, waiting for the reply she knew would come.

“Goodnight, Dr. Ziegler.”

She smiles to herself, content, before finally leaving the room. Once the sound of her heels could no longer be heard a loud groan sounds across the room. The single occupant of the blankets tosses and turns until she’s laying face down, her arms holding the pillow over her head as she grumbled about how stupid and embarrassed she was, but also about how oblivious a particular doctor was.

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That next morning Fareeha wakes up with an odd feeling in her gut. She rules out the possibility of hunger once she eats the abomination that is hospital breakfast, some wet slop which was probably their version of oatmeal and a red apple. She ate like two spoonfuls of the slop, deeming it biohazard, and the entire apple but the feeling still persisted. She got out of bed to walk to the bathroom since that was also a possibility. Upon standing up onto her feet she couldn't help but notice she felt a little off balance. Suddenly the walk to the bathroom was so much farther than usual. She ended up walking along the walls to help balance herself. Once everything was said and done, she still felt the odd feeling, though.

By the time she made it back to bed she was exhausted, deciding to take a small nap before Angela came to check on her. She thought about what she said yesterday about admitting she was envious of whoever she was going out with, and felt the embarrassment creeping back up on her. Luckily the doctor seemed to interpret it differently, but she still mentally scolded herself for being so direct.

Following those thoughts her mind traveled back to when Angela first found her outside, replaying it over and over in her mind. She brought her hand up to that spot on her chest and then she found herself thinking of her mother, reflecting back on her life before she was confined to this hospital, and reflecting on her life now and what it will become in the near future. She ended up so caught up amongst her thoughts that she didn't even hear the nurse enter the room with some medications for her. She glances at the clock and sees it's well past the time Angela said she would be here.

“Hey, where's Ange— uhh, Dr. Ziegler?”

The nurse doesn't seem to notice her slip up, or even seem to care for that matter. “Dr. Ziegler won't be coming tonight, Ms. Amari. She gave me directions to have you take this medication though and she'll check up on you tomorrow morning.”

Fareeha frowns as she's handed a small cup with two pills and a cup of water. She downs the medicine and hands the cups back to the nurse who then leaves, leaving her alone once again. Why didn't Angela come today? Is she okay? Not feeling well? She didn't make her mad yesterday did she? She looks over to her cell phone on the small table next to her bed and wishes she had the doctor's number. She rarely used the thing anyway so it's not like it was one of the things at the forefront of her mind, but still she hoped the doctor was okay.

The next morning came around all too slowly and Fareeha hadn't gained an ounce of sleep the entire night, too concerned about what her favorite blonde was up to. The day fell through its same pattern of breakfast being brought to her, the bathroom seemingly getting farther and farther away, and nurses coming to check on her. They had even wheelchaired her down to get an MRI at the request of her doctor, who, by the way, there has still been no sign of. By the time he late evening flew back around she made the decision that she was going to go find her. Certainly she must have an office somewhere in this building right? It couldn't be too hard to find. The only struggle was that she found walking required more energy than it used to and her balance felt much more off than usual. She's sure the nurses would provide her with a walking tool of some sort if she asked, but pride won't allow her to ask.

Once she makes it to the wall where she can steady herself, it becomes a walk in the park. Or in her case, the hospital. Slowly she inches her way around the perimeter of the room to the door. She had just reached the doorway and had barely took one step out into the hall when someone collided into her, almost sending her falling back had it not been for a hand suddenly around her waist and grabbing her arm. She regained her grip on the doorframe as well to steady herself as having been jostled made her slightly disoriented.

"Mein Gott, Fareeha Amari! What are you doing!?"

"Angela. I was just coming to look for you," she half speaks half grumbles. She was still feeling a little off and a slight headache was slowly making its home in her temple, but she still felt a sense of joy at hearing that voice. She also felt the heat creep up into her face once she realized just how close they were. Angela's hand was still holding her tightly around her waist in case she lost her balance, their hips were just barely touching. The scent of her shampoo was so close to Fareeha's nose she had to resist the urge to lay her head atop hers and just breathe it all in.

"Fareeha, you need to get back in bed."

"N-no wait!" Her sudden outburst stops Angela's movements of guiding her back to her cot, eyebrows raised as if daring her to challenge her. "I... I just wanna go somewhere. I've been in this room for so long, you disappeared and I didn't know where you went, I just—"

She cuts herself off abruptly, unsure of what else to say and feeling slightly embarrassed. She tilts her head upwards and to the side to avoid the gaze she knows Angela is giving her. She's certain her blush could be noticed a mile away, even through her darker complexion. A hand on her cheek brought her gaze back down to stare into pools of blue and the concerned face of the doctor before her.

“Okay,” concedes Angela. “But I'm sitting you in a wheelchair, Fareeha.”

“Please, not a wheelchair. I... I need to walk with my own two legs. I can feel it getting harder, my legs are getting weaker.” Fareeha sighs. “I just want to walk as long as I am able.”

Angela stares at her as she debates within her head, knowing a wheelchair is the safest option but also acknowledging her desires. “Okay, okay. You can use me as support.”

The positioning was awkward due to the difference in height but they managed to figure it out, Angela's left arm wrapped firmly around Fareeha's mid back to hold her steady and Fareeha's right arm stretched across Angela's shoulders to help steady herself.

“Did you have anywhere in mind?”

Fareeha brought her other hand up to rub behind her head. “Ah I can't say I do. I was honestly just on my way to find you, but there's no need for that now.”

“Hmm, I have an idea.”

The two walked at a slow pace down the empty halls of the hospital. It was late so a majority of the staff were back in their homes resting. Most of the patients were asleep, the only sounds being the faint beeping of medical equipment. Fareeha was still feeling a little warm about how close they were. Angela's hand rubbing small circles across her back didn't help either. She decides to start conversation to distract herself.

“So where have you been, Dr. Ziegler?”

“Mhmm, worried about me were you?” she replies with a mischievous smirk. Fareeha turns her head away at her teasing, eliciting a small chuckle from the other woman. “Seriously though. I'm sorry for worrying you. I just needed some time away.”

“From?”

Angela sighs. “I just needed to think about things.”

“Like?” She glances over to Fareeha to see her with her own smirk on her face. “I wouldn't have to ask if you weren't being so ominous and vague,” she teases. “You can talk to me, you know.”

“I know.”

It's been approximately three weeks since they first met, and Angela had to admit that they had become relatively close. She simply got along so well with the Egyptian woman (a fact Fareeha shared with her after Angela mentioned her own Swiss background). The topic was forgotten momentarily once they reached their destination; the cafeteria.

Fareeha looks at her in question, knowing that any chance of getting food here at this time of the night simply wasn't possible. In reply, Angela motions towards the vending machines in the section of the large eating hall. “I thought now would be a better time than ever to enlighten you of the choco-chip ice cream sandwich.”

Fareeha couldn't help but laugh. The two made their way to the picnic-style tables closest to the vending machines. Angela helps her sit down on one of the benches, back to the table. She walks to the vending machine and buys two of the ice cream treats, handing one to Fareeha as she took a seat next to her. She wasted no time in opening hers, exhaling in satisfaction after she took her first bite. She loved these things so much. It has been a while since she last had one. She looks over to see Fareeha examining hers. “Try it, its good I swear!” She takes another bite as if to emphasize her point.

Fareeha opens her own, removing it from the packaging to analyze it once more. It was indeed nothing more than ice cream in between two soft chocolate chip cookies, and it's not like she hasn't eaten cookies before. She goes all in and takes a nice bite out of it, eyes closing shut at the sudden sensitivity of the cold against her teeth. Besides that she had no complaints. It was good. Too good, actually, for just cookies and ice cream. What was in this thing?

“Mmm, you were right. This thing is delicious.”

“I told you.”

“No really, this is like addicting good,” she says in between mouthfuls. The cold isn’t even in the picture anymore. All too soon her treat was gone, and she stares at her messy hands in sadness. “I kinda want another.”

“As your doctor, I don’t think another would fit well into your diet,” laughs the doctor. Fareeha pouts, rising another light chuckle from the blonde. “Buuuuut, as your friend, I’m sure sharing one more wouldn’t do much harm.”

Fareeha’s face lights up as Angela gets up to buy another one. She attempts her hardest to break it evenly in half, face scrunched slightly in concentration which Fareeha couldn’t help but find it absolutely adorable. In the end one half does come out larger than the other, which she offers to the Egyptian despite her protests. Eventually she gives in and takes the larger half, but Angela knows that she secretly was hoping for the bigger piece anyway. They fall into silence again as Fareeha demolishes her half, Angela eyeing her in amazement.

“I better not find any of these wrappers in your room when I come by, Amari.”

“Please, as if I’d be dumb enough to even take the evidence back to my room, Detective Ziegler.”

They share a few more laughs and bicker a little more about seriously not having to add obesity to her list of health concerns before falling into a comfortable silence, the faint humming of the vending machines sounds in the background. It was nice. Fareeha looked over and saw Angela staring down at her lap, her right wrist held in her other hand. She looked like she was contemplating something, like she was thinking of the words to say, so Fareeha waited patiently. Eventually, she looked up, catching her attention.

“I wish I didn’t care so much about this whole soulmate thing.” Eyebrows raised, as this wasn’t what she expected to hear from her, Fareeha turns on the bench to face the doctor. “The other night... The date didn’t really work out. Afterwards, I thought about what you said. I’ve been so caught up all these years in trying to find this person who I knew had to be out there for me. But, I think I’ve just been using it as an excuse to find a reason to be happy.”

Fareeha listens attentively to her words, eyes focused on her as she spoke.

“I lost both of my parents when I was very young, and at the same time I lost something inside of me too. I could no longer find joy in the things I used to find joy in. I started living with my uncle, and I’m sure he noticed I wasn’t my usual self...” Angela looks back down at her wrist, toying with the fabric of her coat. Fareeha watches her as well, wondering. Wondering whether that

was where her mark was or not. “He used to tell me about soulmates. He told me my parents were soulmates, brought together by their desire to help others.” She paused. Her eyes were beginning to water, but she wouldn’t allow herself to cry. “It just sounded so nice. I asked him about soulmates every day, and I couldn’t wait to get my own mark and begin my own search. I just wanted to be happy again... I—”

“I never believed in soulmates.”

The sudden statement from the woman besides her brought Angela’s attention up. Fareeha was staring off into the distance, head turned, focused, eyebrows furrowed in thought.

“My mother did, even though she never found hers. It all sounded so stupid to me.” By now Angela had turned to sit sideways on the bench as well, both of them now facing each other. “Even when I did get my mark, I still thought it was all bullshit.”

“But what about now?”

She tries to smile, but it ends up a sad, slight frown. “I still think it's bullshit,” she admits, exhaling shortly. “But, it is real, and once you’re certain you know who it is, the feeling is indeed... Something.”

At this admission Angela, perks up. She believed very much in soulmates, but it was indeed a rare occurrence in this generation and she knew of no one who actually found theirs. “So you’ve met your soulmate? What was it like?”

“It was...” She paused, thinking of the right word. “It felt like I found a part of me.” At that Angela’s smile widens, but it fades away once she notices the sad look on Fareeha’s face. As if knowing she wanted to ask about it, she continued. “I haven’t told her though.”

“Why no— Oh...”

“Yeah, I probably don’t have much time left.” Angela frowned. She hadn’t visited the woman these past few days, but she still went over the data the nurses had taken. Her nanobots had no effect and the MRI results showed that the muscles in her legs had begun deteriorating. The sudden spike in activity was worrying for her, as her tests thus far have shown little to no drastic changes to her body. She had spent some time trying to figure out what triggered it, but came up with nothing. Fareeha noticed her falling into her thoughts and gave her a light flick on the nose. “Hey, its okay. It’s not like this is news to either of us right? We both knew the chances of my

survival were slim.”

“Fareeha...”

“It’s okay, Angela. It’s okay,” she says, her voice fading slightly on the second utterance, because she knew deep down that it wasn’t.

There was a sudden chill in the room, causing Fareeha to shiver slightly. Well trained eyes, caught sight of it immediately. “Are you cold?”

Angela began to slip off her white coat to give to her since she still had her dark gray turtleneck on underneath. Naturally, Fareeha prepared to protest and play it off like she wasn’t really cold. As Angela pulled her arms out of the white sleeves of the coat, however, Fareeha caught sight of a marking on her wrist. The sleeve of her undershirt was pulled back to the middle of her forearm, leaving her wrists open and nothing to hide the symbol etched into her skin. Fareeha froze on the spot, swallowing hard. Angela takes her lack of movement as acceptance of her offering and slips the jacket around her shoulders. All the while, Fareeha’s eyes remain fixed on her wrist, on the white feather imprinted there. She feels a tug in her chest and, almost mechanically, her hand rubs at that exact spot.

“Do you experience chest pains often, Fareeha?” The voice pulls her eyes away from the doctor’s wrist and she finds Angela looking at her in concern, doctor mode now activated. She inches closer, their legs touching now. “I notice you rubbing that particular spot a lot. I can take a look if you like.”

She reaches a hand out towards her, moving to touch the spot herself but only hovering there, waiting for permission to do so. Permission which Fareeha denies when she grabs hold of her wrist, guiding it back down to her lap. “It’s nothing. Just an itch.”

She lowers her head at the skeptical look the doctor gives her, and thankfully she doesn’t pursue the issue any further. Staring down she realizes Fareeha still holding her hand and blushes. She rubs her thumb against her hand to remind her of such, and Fareeha immediately jerks her hand back with a string of apologies to which Angela chuckles into her palm. Realizing it’s gotten late they both agree it’s time to head back. They walk in silence, each thinking heavily about life, what the future holds, and, unbeknownst to either of them, each other.

As time goes by Fareeha’s health begins its slow decline. Every few days Angela revises the formula for her nanobiotics, running tests and the like in attempts to find something to at least slow down the rate at which her illness was affecting her. All her attempts would come to show no results and slowly Angela found that she was losing faith in her research. Fareeha had also taken a

hit to her personality. Their time spent together was no longer chatty and full of laughs. Some days they didn't even bother sharing their daily fact.

After a few weeks of continued failed attempts with the nanobots, Angela receives news from the nurses that Fareeha had fallen in her attempt to get to the bathroom. Of course she had rushed to the room as soon as she heard to make sure the woman was okay. A few tests later and, as expected, it's shown that the muscles in her legs had weakened significantly. Angela could only stand back and watch as she slowly withdrew herself from the world. She made attempts to cheer her up whenever she could, but it hardly ever had any effect. She had even brought her an ice cream sandwich which she had found melted the next day, untouched in the same spot where she placed it.

Fareeha's episode of depression rubbed off on Angela a bit as well. She felt down, staying in her office most of the day when she wasn't needed elsewhere. She hadn't even bothered arranging anymore of those stupid dates, too unbothered to care about a soulmate at the moment. Satya had came by to question her well being, even, stating that the blonde seemed a little off lately. Of course she assured her that things were fine, but in reality things were not fine. They had certainly taken a turn for the worse.

It was a late Sunday night when Angela found herself still in her office, going over her research in hopes of finding some kind of breakthrough. She eyes the time at the bottom corner of her screen and sees it's way past midnight. It was about time to start heading home. Making sure her files were saved, she shuts down her computer and puts any open papers on her desk back into their folders. A few moments later and she's walking down the empty halls of the hospital, silent except for the click of her heels on the floor.

It has to be fate that her ears pick up a sound coming from one of the rooms. It has to be fate that she looks at the room number to see room 690; Fareeha's room.

Angela stops, debating whether she should go in or not. It is late. Chances are she would be sleeping. Her eyes glance to the door and she walks closer to it. Soon enough she's pushing down on the handle, opening the door slowly as she slips in, shutting it gently behind her. It was dark minus the illuminating light from the moon through the windows. Fareeha is sat up in bed, clearly not sleeping, as she looked out the window. The first step she took alerted the other of her presence, heels not being stealthy in any way. Upon noticing her she immediately wipes at her face with the back of her hand.

Is she crying?

"Doctor," a pause as she tries to stifle a sniffle. Angela confirms that she is, or at least was definitely crying. "What are you doing here so late?"

Upon reaching the edge of the bed Angela can see the redness that clouded the whites of her eyes. She had managed to wipe away the wetness on her face, but Angela was no fool. The thought of Fareeha sitting in bed all alone crying about the cruel fate she's been handed leaves a bad taste in her mouth. She places her jacket on a nearby chair before sitting on the edge of the bed next to her. She reaches a hand to cup the side of her face, her thumb wipes away tears that begin to spill over.

"I'm not here as your doctor tonight, Fareeha. I'm here as your friend."

The tears fall freely now, not that she could have stopped them had she wanted to. Angela removes her shoes to sit further onto the bed, pulling Fareeha into her arms and laying them back to rest against the reclined top of the bed. She holds the crying woman in her arms, head resting against her chest as she cried silent tears, fingers combing through her hair in comfort. A part of her wondered when the last time the woman in her arms had received such contact. When the last time someone held her was. When the last time she received even a hug. How long she's been in this hospital, dying. The thoughts brought about tears of her own, partially for reasons she understood but mostly because of a feeling she couldn't place. The tears slowly trickle down the side of her face before she could stop them, to fall down against Fareeha's. She tilts her head up towards the blonde at the sudden wetness, reaching up with a hand to her face to wipe them away. Her hand lingers there, even after the last of the tears are gone.

"Hmm, I'm conflicted about who should be comforting who now," she jokes, in hopes of brightening Angela's spirits. It works. She can feel the muscles of her face moving into a smile beneath her hand.

"Tell me something, Fareeha."

The woman in question sits up so that they now lay side by side, her underneath the blankets and Angela on top. Her eyes glance down fair skinned arms down to her hands which fiddle idly in her lap now. The white feather catches her attention once again, triggering an odd sensation in her chest that was very much different from all the other times. This time, it hurt. "I am dying," she says finally, turning to make eye contact as she does so.

Angela frowns at this. That wasn't what she had expected to hear. "Tell me something else."

"I don't want to die."

"Fareeha... I'm not sure this is comforting for you or me, at this point."

“Speak for yourself. I’ve got nothing but comfort with a beautiful lady lying here next to me in my bed.”

“Always the flatterer aren't you,” comes Angela's reply, even though she's trying to fight back the blush painted on her face. She turns to look at Fareeha, and for the first time since they met she truly *looks* at her. Has she always been so beautiful? So absolutely stunning? Her face is serious and her gaze is strong. For a second she feels it to be too much, breaking the eye contact for a small moment. The longer *she* looked into her eyes she felt a strange feeling in her center. The longer Fareeha looked at *her*, she felt her heart rate increase rapidly.

It seemed like she was thinking heavily on something, weighing in her mind whether to ask or not. She comes to her decision, though, as she speaks, “Angela. Will you grant me one dying wish?”

Another frown. “Fareeha, don't...”

“I'm serious, Angela.” The change in the tone of her voice was all she needed to understand how important this was to Fareeha. “I'll understand if you say no... And if you do say no, I don't want it to change anything between us... and—”

Her rambling was silenced by Angela's hands on both side of her face. She didn't know what kind of request the woman could have. But she knew for certain that in these past weeks since they've met, something was built between them. She had somehow become one of the most important people in Angela's life without her even realizing it. “Fareeha. I'd give you anything you want if I have it to give. What do you want, Schatz?”

She swallows hard. Her hand comes up to grab one of Angela's from her face, thumb sliding across her palm before working its way down to the feather imprinted in her skin. She gets that feeling in her chest again— the good kind, this time— and it gives her the push she needed to really go through with this. If she were to die tomorrow she would die happy knowing that she could at least have this. Their eyes meet one more time, Angela's questioning and Fareeha's ready to give the answer.

“You, Angela. I want you.”

Oh.

Oh.

She wanted to think that she misheard, but there was no mistaking the words that came from in between her lips. Angela's face was set aflame at the request and she suddenly became much more aware of how close they were. Much more aware of the hand on Fareeha's face, her other hand within her grasp. Much more aware of the brown eyes asking her— no, pleading her for this. Every part of her brain was telling her no, the logical side knowing how wrong it would be. But her heart, her poor heart, tired of this neverending search for a soulmate who may not even exist screamed at her to say yes. Outside of her internal battle, the woman in front of her waits ever so patiently for an answer.

One look into the eyes in front of her and she knows her decision. She leans closer and repositioning the hand on Fareeha's cheek she pulls her in as well until their foreheads touch, closing her eyes. Fareeha wants this. She needs this.

But what do you want, Angela?

What does she want?

Finally she opens her eyes, smiling softly as she breathes out the words. Who even was she kidding? She needs this just as much as her.

“Yes.”

Those words were all she needed to hear.

As soon as they were spoken Fareeha closed the gap between them, capturing her mouth with her own. Something she couldn't describe washed through Angela at the contact. Something akin to a shiver that traveled through every inch of her body. She couldn't stop the slight whimper from escaping the back of her throat, that sudden feeling and the absolute softness of Fareeha's lips on hers too much. They break apart momentarily but Angela's arms wrapped around Fareeha's neck pulls them back together, a tongue darting across her lips the signal she needs to open her mouth, deepening the kiss.

The blankets are thrown away as Fareeha moves to straddle the smaller woman. A sharp push on her shoulder reverses the situation, though, and Fareeha finds herself pinned against the bed, Angela's hands on her shoulders. She groans in irritation through their kiss and she can feel the other's smile against her mouth.

“Angela,” she gasps, breaking their kiss as she tries once more to flip their positions. “This isn't exactly what I had in mind...” She groans again at the ‘tsk tsk’ she received in return, a finger wagged in her face for extra effect.

“I’m still your doctor, and I’m not going to let you put unnecessary strain on your legs.”

“This strain *is* necessary, Doctor,” she mumbles into her neck, having leaned forward suck the skin there. Angela’s head tilts back to accommodate her, hands moving to bury themselves in her hair. With her fate accepted, Fareeha moves to make do with the hand she’s been dealt. She wraps an arm around a petite waist as she pushes herself into an upright position, making sure to ‘accidentally’ push her thigh up into Angela’s center as she did so. She muffles her squeal from the action into Fareeha’s neck as tanned hands reach up to unbutton her blouse. She hadn’t even bothered to get all of them open before her mouth was on her chest, pulling the cups to her bra with her teeth.

Angela’s arms found their way back around her neck as she worked. She could tell she succeeded once she felt the warm wetness of her mouth around a taut nipple, followed by the cold air of the room when she pulled away. It was then that Angela really thought about the absurdity of this situation. That she, a doctor, was currently in the process of being bedded by her patient, and still in the hospital at that. She was pretty sure there’s a rule somewhere stating she could get fired for this.

Any potential worries crumbled once she felt Fareeha’s fingers brush against her through her underwear, the short skirt she was wearing barely a hindrance. Hands still tangled in dark locks, she pulls her head out of her breasts to claim her mouth once again, stifling her moans as she continued to toy with her. She found herself rolling her hips, grinding into her hand in a silent plea for more. Fareeha on the other hand felt like she was in a good place, leaving all sorts of marks across Angela’s breast between the licking and suckling as she continued to rub and apply pressure through the now damp fabric. The teasing of her fingers was driving Angela insane, her cries getting a little louder. It was becoming too much. She needed more.

“Please, Fareeha,” she moaned into the top of her head. She pushes them back down so they lay on the recline again. Apparently this was the initiative the Egyptian needed to finally pull her panties to the side slide a single finger through her folds oh so slowly. She exhales heavily at the contact but whimpers once she realizes Fareeha only means to continue her teasing. Now that there's physical contact, that she can feel the warmth of Fareeha’s fingers against her, she only needs it more.

“Tell me what you want.” Fareeha's breath is on her ear now, her tongue tracing the curve of the top of it before pulling the lobe into her mouth. Her free hand works against soft mounds of flesh in place of her mouth.

She snakes her hand down between them, sliding down Fareeha's body over her gown to find purchase between her legs. There was no barrier of fabric here, the gown being the only article of clothing patients are allowed to wear. She can hear Fareeha's breath hitch in her ear when she rubbed a finger against her, turning the tables. She teased the woman below her using the same methods Fareeha was using on her, making sure to tease agonizingly slow. The sound of her low moans were like music to Angela's ears.

"I want you to stop being a tease," she breathes. She trails her finger through Fareeha's folds, reveling at the sounds she made in response. She dare begin to push her finger inside her, but Fareeha's hand on her own stops her, their eyes meet as if Angela is questioning why she stopped her. She receives her answer when Fareeha suddenly takes two fingers and plunges them inside of her. Unexpected as it was, there was nothing she could do to stop the moan that escaped her. A wave of pleasure swallows her at the feeling and for a second she felt she could come undone right then and there

The slowness from before is forgotten as she feels those long fingers begin to pump into her. Her mouth is on Fareeha's face trying to connect with her lips to release her moans against them. When she adds in a third finger so easily, swallowing her cries with her mouth. She could feel her release building quickly, her hips rocking against Fareeha's hand. She was so close, her muscles tightening as she felt herself reaching her peak. Fareeha must have felt it too. She was right on the edge when Fareeha pulls out. Angela whines at the sudden emptiness, all too ready to berate the woman for playing around, when she's suddenly lifted by hands under her thighs. In shock her hands wrap securely around Fareeha's shoulders as their positions are switched, and she finds herself pinned under her.

"Fareeha Amari, what did I—"

She was silenced by their mouths coming together again, however this time there was an urgency in the woman above her that wasn't there before. Her eyes followed the head of black hair as she began her descent downwards, trailing kisses all the way. She hovers over her destination just briefly before diving in, no warning as she devours Angela's lips.

Angela cries out at the intense feeling of pleasure that washes over her, Fareeha relentless in her ministrations. Everything about this just feels so *right*. So perfect, as if Fareeha is right where she should be. Her hand reached down to grab a fistful of dark hair, her other one between her teeth in a futile attempt to muffle her moans. Fareeha's own hand comes up to grasp hers, pulling it away from her mouth all the while her mouth and tongue work wonders on her sex. She replaces said hand with two of her fingers, pushing them into her mouth at the same time she thrusts her fingers into her again. Angela moans around the fingers in her mouth, sucking on them to try and lessen the noise she made.

They continue in a steady rhythm, Fareeha working Angela back up to the edge. Her cries become more frequent as she feels herself being built up, and soon she comes undone, moaning into Fareeha's fingers as she squirmed into the bed in an attempt to push Fareeha away as she continued to lap at the now sensitive flesh.

"Mein Gott, *Fareeha*, " she manages around the fingers still in her mouth. She feels that smirk against her as the Egyptian continues, sending her body into another set of tremors, her cries at this point come out as silent squeals and quiet whimpers. Fareeha leans up to place a series of light kisses down Angela's face, her fingers still working to ease her down from her high. She purposely hits a spot she knows to be sensitive, eliciting a gasp from Angela that she captures with her mouth, pulling her into a deep kiss.

She finally pulls her fingers away once the tremors stop, bringing them up to her mouth to lick clean, grinning all the while. She rolls over to Angela's right, laying on her side to admire her, still basking in the feeling of everything that just happened. Exhaustion creeps up on her and she acknowledges that Angela was right as her muscles are now sore from bearing her weight. Even just laying on her side is strainful so she rolls down into her back. No less than a few seconds later Angela turns to lay on her chest, breathing out a happy sigh.

"It's nice to know flirting and flattery isn't the only thing you can use your mouth for."

"Oh?" Fareeha leans back in surprise. "Dr. Ziegler, are you impressed?" She doesn't reply, but she decides to let it go. "Stay with me for the night?"

Angela looks up to her pleading eyes. She knows she risks getting caught every second longer she stays here, but a part of her couldn't say no. Surely if she left before the nurses began morning rounds she should be fine. Once the thought came the exhaustion suddenly overcame her. Combined with the warmth of being cuddled up in Fareeha's arms... "Only because you asked so nicely."

They lay in comfortable silence after that, sleep creeping up ever so slowly before Angela speaks up.

"Fareeha?"

It comes out as a slight slur, as she borders on the edge of sleep.

"Hmm?"

“Do you trust me?”

Fareeha sits up to meet her gaze, any feeling of sleep gone in that moment. She takes her face in her hands, brushing the hair from her face as she speaks her next words, “I trust you with my life, Angela Ziegler.”

And those words were just what she needed to compel her to fight till the very end.

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Angela awakes the next morning and even though she's huddled up on a hospital bed meant for one and she doesn't have a pillow, it was the best sleep she's gotten in a long while. She awakens laying on her stomach, Fareeha laying the same way half on her, half on the bed. Her weight on her back provided a odd sense of comfort that brought a smile to her face, before it fell once she realized just *where* exactly she was.

Oh fuck.

A glance at the clock on the wall showed fifteen past seven. Rounds start at seven sharp. Slowly, as to not wake Fareeha, she slips out of bed. She puts her shoes on and buttons the unbuttoned section of her blouse. Smoothing down her skirt she l grabs her jacket, stopping at the door to take one more look at the sleeping form in bed. Her hair was fanned across her face and it would move occasionally as she breathed. It was adorable to say the least. A thought crosses her mind before she even finds herself acknowledging it. For a second she thinks that she would love if fate had handed her Fareeha as a soulmate. In an alternate universe where she wasn't sick and she apparently hadn't already found a soulmate of her own. Once it registered what exactly she had just thought of her face reddened in embarrassment. Even as she slipped out the door and down to her office she still couldn't get the thought out of her head.

She thought back to when Fareeha had talked to her about soulmates and how she had found hers. She thought about how she said she hadn't told them, and she couldn't blame her. Fareeha was unsure of how much time she had left or even if she'd make it through all this mess. And knowing Fareeha as a person, she wouldn't bring it up as no one would want to finally find their soulmate only to find out that they're slowly dying.

Angela frowns at the thought, at how cruel life seems to be towards the bronze skinned woman. She was so absorbed in her thoughts she hadn't even noticed her boss walking towards her down the hall.

“Dr. Ziegler, you're here earlier than usual.”

Angela jumps at the sound of her voice. Satya Vaswani was the absolute *last* person she needed to run into right now. Hair slightly tousled, still wearing the same clothes from yesterday... The odds were not in her favor this morning.

“Goodmorning, Chief Vaswani,” she greets. She decides if she ignores her comment the older woman would just let it slide.

She doesn't.

“Are those the same clothes you were wearing yesterday?”

Angela feigns shock as she takes in her outfit. “Oh wow would you look at that.” She forces out a laugh. “I got dressed in the dark this morning, I didn't even notice.”

Satya eyes her with a skeptical look. She knows something is off. Angela knows she knows something is off, but a part of her is praying to every god she can think of that she decides to leave it alone.

“It's actually a good thing I ran into you. I've been having some issues with my tablet.”

Thank the heavens.

Angela breathes a mental exhale in relief that the topic has been changes. She watches as Satya pulls out her tablet to explain what's wrong with it. Apparently the touch mechanism is all jumbled. Pressing certain letters on the keyboard types a different letter instead, touching on the left side registers as a touch on the right. She wasn't too tech savvy at all, but she knew this was just a simple signal error. “Have you tried turning it off and turning it back on?” She receives a glare at the question to which she decides to elaborate. “I mean like a hard reset to actually reset the hardware inside. It's just a minor communication error. The signals from the motherboard must get mixed up along the way, changing the outcome of the command. Computers are kinda like the human brain so it's not too hard to get the gyst of.”

She smiles when Satya nods her head in understanding, accepting the tablet back. They go their delegate ways after that and as Angela continues her walk down the hall, a massive thought hits her. She freezes as she thinks back to what she just said.

Computers are kinda like the human brain...

Signals getting mixed up along the way...

She thinks back to the tablet. It was mechanically sound and working, but something inside simply malfunctioned. She then thinks back to a particular patient of hers who is healthy beyond reason but something inside of her is malfunctioning...

It hits her like an epiphany and she finds herself turning around calling out to her senior to share her sudden discovery.

"So you're telling me you want to hard reset her brain?"

Angela looks at the woman sitting in the desk across from her with the utmost certainty. "Yes."

"Angela. Explain." When the blonde doctor had come to her saying she figured out what was wrong with Fareeha Amari, this wasn't exactly the answer she was expecting.

"So the issue with your tablet was that the touch sensors weren't registering properly. A touch on one part of the screen registered as a touch somewhere else. This was because signals of some sort inside were clearly getting scrambled and a simple reset solved it. Now I don't know much about technical hardware, but I do know about human hardware." Satya leans forward, her chin resting on her hands as she listened intently. "There is nothing internally wrong with Fareeha Amari. There are no abnormalities found anywhere, all of her tests come back positive, but her body is slowly shutting down. How does one explain her the weakening of her legs so suddenly? Well it has to be miscommunication between her brain and her body. Her brain has to be sending the wrong signals. The body only does what the brain tells it to and if the brain is telling it to weaken..." She gestures with her hands, questioning whether the other woman saw where she was going with this or not.

"Alright, that makes sense, but scans on the brain also come up clear."

"And that's because there's nothing outwardly wrong with it. It's like a malfunction of sorts."

Angela's brain was flowing with potential ideas of what exactly this problem could be. It was all of course still speculation, but she was currently thinking up new hypothesis at a mile a second. She honestly couldn't believe she hadn't thought of this before.

“Listen, I know this all sounds absurd, but if you can give me a week I feel confident I'll be able to have a written report with a solution to this problem.”

At that Satya raised a high eyebrow. She knew Angela was indeed a confident doctor, but such a display of conviction, especially in regards to a case that had the whole hospital stumped, surprised her. Still, she had no doubt in her mind that if anyone could come to an answer, it would be Angela Ziegler.

“Alright, Angela. You have one week.”

The blonde's grin was full of confidence. One week was more than enough time.

With her one week deadline, Angela officially went into overdrive mode. She spent every waking hour in the hospital and lived off of caffeine. When she could she did whatever work she could in Fareeha's room on her laptop so they could share the satisfaction of each other's company. Ever since the other night something changed between them, but in a good way. A *very* good way. It was like they somehow felt closer. Unfortunately, Fareeha was getting worse at an alarmingly quickening pace. On a good day she had just enough energy to sit up and talk with her, but for most of the week she slept. Somehow she was never too exhausted for a kiss or two. Angela very much appreciated the sentiment.

It was one particular night when Angela was sitting in a chair pushed up to the side of Fareeha's bed. They decided that night time was the best time to *really* spend time together without having to worry too much about being bothered. It was the final day of her deadline to report back to Satya and she had everything ready to present to her. As such she had some spare time to spend in each other's company.

Fareeha was laying in bed, eyes closed but definitely awake. There was an IV attached to her arm now that she wasn't eating properly or getting enough fluids. She was also connected to a heart monitor as well, the steady beeping of the machine flowing into the ambience of the room. Angela begins to think about the upcoming days, how tomorrow would basically decide whether she saves Fareeha or not. She had wanted to tell her about the surgery she had planned but Fareeha was adamant that she not know anything about it. She didn't even want to know when it was going to happen. If everything did work out though, she'd most likely have to do some physical therapy to get her strength back, but after that she would be a free woman again, free to do

whatever she pleased. Angela thought heavily about them and what exactly this thing they had going on was. Whether this thing they had would continue if Fareeha ever gotten better. She did say she found her soulmate already. Why would she bother with her if there was someone out there waiting?

Angela was brought out of her musing by an extremely weak flick to the forehead.

“I don’t even need to have my eyes open to know that you’re thinking too heavily about something irrelevant, Angela.” Pouting, she sits up from her previous position of leaning on the side of the bed to sit more upright. “Judging from your brooding nature today, I’d like to assume something major may be happening soon.” She pauses, taking some time steady her breathing before continuing. “Are you really going to spend our last bit of time together lost in thought?”

“It’s not our last time together. I’ll come back tomorrow after I speak with my boss.”

Fareeha ‘mhmms’ in response. “Just to be safe, let’s say this will be our last.”

Angela’s eyes narrow, suspecting that Fareeha might know something that she doesn’t know. She waves away the possibility though. She remembers her thoughts from before she was interrupted and figures now would be a better time than ever to get some clarification. “Fareeha, what am I to you?”

It was a question she had been wondering ever since that night. Ever since the beginning of this strange relationship they’ve built. She wants to believe that night was more than just some kind of stress reliever for the both of them. Does Fareeha really like her like that? What about this mystery soulmate she has out there?

“That day, when you found me outside that window... Did you not feel it, too?” Those sudden words grabs her attention and she tries to think back to that day, trying to remember if she felt anything odd. All she could do was stare back in confusion as no such memory came to mind. Fareeha sees her confusion and frowns briefly before shaking her head. “Nevermind. Just know that I like you very much, Angela Ziegler. More than you know.”

In her eyes, Angela could have sworn she saw glimmer of something, but she closed them again with a sigh as she sank further into the bed. To be honest, she still didn’t quite get it. But she was certain that Fareeha had something she wasn’t telling her. “You’re being quite foreboding tonight, and I can’t say I particularly enjoy it.”

“I’m sorry.”

Angela frowns. She had meant it as a joke, but apparently the other woman truly felt that way. She wanted to say more, but Fareeha spoke first. “I actually think I’d really like to get some rest now.”

It wasn't hard to tell that was a cue for Angela to leave. Sadly, she stands and pushes her chair back to its original position. Fareeha's hand reaches out to her and she takes it in hers, smiling at her thumb caressing her wrist. She makes a weak attempt to tug Angela closer, barely able to even pull her arm. She gets the hint however and moves so she's standing right next to the bed. Fareeha smiles up at her in the way that, Angela's come to realize, only she can smile.

“A kiss to make me feel better?”

Angela's expression matches hers at the request and she reaches a hand up to push some hair out of her face. “You're ridiculous, you know,” she replies, bending down to place a brief kiss on her lips.

“But that's why you love me right?” Angela's heart skips a beat at the L-word, but she doesn't have time to dwell on it as Fareeha speaks again. “A kiss for good luck?”

This time she can't help but smirk at her antics, but of course she gives in, bending over to press their lips together once more, albeit for a little longer than the first.

“You spoil me, Doctor.”

“I suppose I do.”

“Spoil me once more with a kiss goodnight?”

“Fareeha...” She tries to sound bothered but fails. They both knew she was enjoying this just as much.

“This will be the last one, I swear.”

“Fine, fine. One more,” she warns. They'd honestly be here all night if they kept this up.

Once again she leans down. Their lips meet, but this time it is Fareeha who takes the initiative, capturing the blonde's lips between her own. Immediately Angela could tell that this was different. She felt the silent plea of her tongue and against her better nature, obliged by opening her mouth for her. The steady beeping of the heart monitor increases steadily in pace as they're both lost in each other. Angela brings her knee up onto the bed to steady herself, both her hands on either side of Fareeha's face.

The thought occurs to Angela that this is more than a kiss; that this is Fareeha's silent answer to all of her doubts. This is Fareeha's speaking to her the words trapped on the tip of her tongue, and Angela hears—no, she feels them all. She feels the water in her eyes build because she knows that this kiss is a thank you, a confession, and most of all a goodbye.

When they finally part, they bring their foreheads together as they catch their breath, Fareeha more so as the rapid beating of the monitor falls back into a steady rhythm. That clearly took a lot more energy than she truly had to give, and she felt herself falling too easily into sleep. She barely manages to crack an eye open, barely able to take Angela's hand in hers and guide it; placing it over her chest.

“Goodnight, Angela.”

She's asleep faster than Angela could even give a reply. She stood there half standing half kneeling on the bed, thinking over everything she was just told like the words were etched onto her lips forever. Her thumb brushes over the spot on her chest and she feels a pulsing in her wrist. Bringing it up closer she examines the white feather there, the white feather that held its control over her. All this time she's wasted trying to find a soulmate destined for her when in actuality anyone could truly be her soulmate if wished it. A symbol etched into your skin shouldn't determine that.

Her eyes study the woman before her one last time before she stands up straight, ready to go home and get some rest. She makes it to the door, hand on the handle when she stops and turns around once more.

“I very much like you too, Fareeha Amari.”

Angela's meeting with the chief goes well. Satya looks over her notes and the procedure she would like to perform and approved of it all the way. It is an advanced procedure which would essentially involve shutting down the brain and then literally restarting it using the help of the nanobots that Angela is certain she has perfected. She had a good feeling about today on her commute to work. She somehow *knew* that everything was going to work out fine.

She watched as Satya finished the last page of the binder she had created, typing some notes into her tablet afterwards. "This is groundbreaking stuff, Dr. Ziegler. If this works you could start seeing the tidbits of fame amongst the medical world."

She blushes at the thought, but honestly that's the last thing she even cared about at this point. She simply wants this surgery to make Fareeha better.

"So when will we perform the surgery?"

At her question, the woman across from her gives her a look, and it is with that look that all the good feelings that Angela had coming into this dissipates.

"The surgery I'd like to have done as soon as possible. Amari's getting bad faster than before so the quicker this happens the better." Angela nods in agreement but still has this bad feeling. "However..."

Oh no...

"You, Angela, will not be taking part."

A pause.

Silence.

Did she hear that correctly? "Excuse me?"

Satya pulls out a paper from her drawer and slides it over to the blonde.

“I'm placing you on temporary leave, Angela,” she hears her say as she reads over the text on the page. Surely enough her boss has placed her on two weeks leave and it had been approved by those higher up as well.

At first she felt confusion, but then she felt the slight tendrils of anger creeping up on her. “W-why? I don't understand...”

“You know exactly why, Angela.” And it was true, she did, but to her that didn't mean she couldn't operate. “You've clearly grown attached to the patient. I can't have you operate on her like that, you know the protocol, Angela.”

And just like that her good day was turned into a bad one. “You can't just do this...”

“Your leave starts now so gather your things. I don't want to see you anywhere in these halls until the surgery is over. You can wait in the waiting room if you like.”

A part of her didn't believe this was actually happening, but a part of her should have seen this coming. She thought back to last night; that feeling that Fareeha knew something that she didn't. This was it. She knew they weren't going to let her operate. How had she been so blind? There would be no arguing with her higher up if she wished to keep her job. This decision was final.

“Can I at least go see her?”

“No. I just put in an order to have her prepped for surgery,” she replied motioning to the tablet she was just typing on. She takes note of the devastated state of her best employee and sighs. “Listen, Angela. I'm sorry. But it has to be done.”

“Who will perform the surgery then?”

“I will.”

The blonde exhales. That is a relief. Probably the best news she's gotten so far. If there were any hands in this hospital more capable than hers, it was going to be the chief herself. It reassured her to know Satya would be the one working on Fareeha, but it still troubled her that she wouldn't get

to be there. "Please take care of her."

A smile. "I will."

"And you're sure you understand the procedure."

"Yes."

"I can go over it with you once more if you like."

"That won't be necessary."

"What if there's any complic—"

"Angela. Go get some rest."

Satya gave her a look that was as stern in her command, but also apologetic. A part of Angela knew she would let her operate if she could. It was clearly just as much out of her hands as it was herself. She was reluctant, but slowly she stood to leave. She felt so compelled to do something even though there was nothing she could do. With her fate accepted, Angela leaves Satya's office, beginning her slow walk to the exit. Without thinking she walks down a familiar hallway. She glances up to see room 690. The door is open and she can't help herself from looking inside.

There are two nurses in there. Why are there two nurses in there?

Crossing the hall to get closer to the door she can hear them frantically calling for someone to page a doctor. They're hovered over the bed, one of them is using a manual resuscitator. The rapid beeping of the heart rate monitor reaches her ears. She's in the doorway now as she hears them once again call for a doctor.

A doctor. *I'm a doctor.*

She steps into the room. She too feels frantic but she can only walk. One of the nurses notice her,

turning to face her.

“Dr. Ziegler you’re not supposed to be in here.”

“I’m her doctor. W-whats happening?”

She tries to get closer to the scene, her legs move urgently now. The sounds from the heart rate monitor increase in pace. She can faintly hear someone telling her she needs to leave, something about Chief Vaswani’s order, but she pays them no mind. The sight she sees before her rips at her heart.

In the bed is unconscious Fareeha, spasming slightly and clearly having trouble breathing. Her brain automatically tells her she’s going into cardiac arrest.

No, no no no...

There’s a hand on her arm. She shakes it off, eyes wide as she turns to the nurse next to her. “Dr. Ziegler we have orders, you can’t be here.”

She pushes past them anyway, easily clearing around to the other side of the bed. Orders or not, she’d be damned if she let Fareeha die before she even gets into surgery. “If the Chief has a problem with me saving a life then so fucking be it. Now if you’re going to stand there doing nothing, go get me a defibrillator,” the doctor yells orders. When the nurse makes no move to go anywhere she turns to her again. “That means now!”

Once they leave, hopefully to do as she told them, she turns to the other nurse who continues to pump air into Fareeha’s lungs with the resuscitator.

That’s fine.

She pulls out her flashlight, opening an eyelid and flashing the light there. Once she sees what she’s looking for she sighs in relief. She doesn’t need to look at the monitor to know that her condition as of now is critical. She really needs that defibrillator. In the meantime she begins pumping her chest in an attempt to get her to breathe better. Soon enough the nurse returns with the defibrillator. She’s urgently rolling it over to her when the constant beep depicting her heart rate flattens out.

No, no, no..

Her training as a medical professional is the only thing on her mind now. She wasn't going to let Fareeha die here. There wasn't time to think about anything other than saving her. It all happens so fast that she's opening her gown to prepare for the first shock. The nurse handed her the paddles to the device and she rubbed them together in a silent prayer, silently pleading that she comes back. When they're charged, the nurses stand back a bit as she wastes no time in pressing them to her chest, the shock lifting her upper body slightly from the bed. Blue eyes scan the monitor for any changes and when she sees none she prepares to try again.

Come on, Fareeha, please...

When the charge is ready and Angela goes in for the shock once more is when a few more nurses come in, led by Satya. She can faintly hear her asking 'what's going on', but was too focused on the monitor to acknowledge it, willing the flat line on the screen to move. There was silence in the room, having drowned out everything except herself and that machine. Her eyes closed in concentration, and she's sure she prayed to every deity in existence to give Fareeha back to her. She was ready to give up hope when the faint sound of the beeping once again filled her ears, slowly falling into a comfortable rhythm.

Angela sighed in relief, almost collapsing to the floor had it not been for Satya suddenly behind her, barking orders to the nurses. "She's going into surgery NOW! Get her to an operating room quickly!"

With everything done and over with, Satya sat Angela down in a nearby chair, calming her down as the tears began to fall. She couldn't stay too long however as she was the one doing the surgery. When she did leave she left a nurse to watch over her, but Angela quickly dismissed her, wanting to be alone.

How long she sat there crying, replaying what just happened over and over again? She wasn't too sure. Fareeha had died in front of her. What would have happened had she not been walking by? She tried not to think those kind of thoughts. Before long she calmed down into silent cries, balled up in the seat of the chair she was in, recalling to memory every detail she remembered of Fareeha to soothe her.

She was soothing herself into an easy slumber when she remembered something.

So caught up in the moment of trying to save her, she hadn't had time to really acknowledge the

odd mark she saw on her chest. Her mind tried to create an image for her but she wasn't paying much attention at the time. All she caught of it was that it was blue in color, and it was a strangely familiar shape that she was certain she knew well.

She brought a hand up to wipe some stray tears from her eyes. As she lay her hand down she stared at the soulmark on her wrist, taking in its shape.

A shape I know well...

Sleep had almost overcome her when she made the connection, cross referencing the feather imprinted on her arm with the blue mark she saw on Fareeha. They were the same shape, identical even from what she could recall from her memory.

That would make it... a blue feather.

End Notes

Listen okay. I had a plan coming into this and I veered off of it so hard. I can take this in one of two directions and I'm still not sure which one to go with. I started this thing certain of a particular outcome but throughout writing I started to have mixed feelings lol. I'm gonna sleep on it for a while. Also, I am not a doctor so sorry if I offend any medically inclined people with my potential butchering of your profession. Sorry for any possible typos, spelling errors, etc. I just wanted to be done with this... and I'm still not even done with it.

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